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community linkages



defining relationships

**Find Your Group**



community linkages



merging community linkages



community connection

Community groups are urged to collaborate...collaborate...collaborate! But is this appropriate for all communities for all issues? Understanding the many different levels of community linkages and applying an appropriate level increases the likelihood of a community group achieving shared goals and outcomes. Collaborations are but one level of possible community linkages. At least four other levels of linking exist and they may be more appropriate and effective depending on the situation. This exercise will enable the participants to decide what level they are currently in and whether this level is most appropriate given the situation. They will do this by rank their group in the three basic function areas (purpose, structure, and process) of a group. Facilitators are encouraged to review the community linking matrix (Figure 1 from the *Collaboration Framework*).

The community linking matrix defines a range of relationships in working together. This matrix identifies five levels of relationships and the purpose, structures, and processes for each level. Using this matrix can assist community groups in focusing their efforts to support new relationships in meeting the objects of the group. The exercise is an interactive way for a group to self assess where it is in the linkage and whether it needs to change.

**Purpose:**

To identify current members perceptions of what level of community linkage they are operating at in terms of a three major function areas: (1) purpose, (2) structure, and (3) process.

To assess whether the collaboration is operating at the most efficient level in terms of three function areas

Be a point of discussion by coalition members to clarify understanding of who we are and what we want to accomplish

**Materials:**

5 cards for purpose; 5 cards for structure; 5 cards for process

–Cards should be color coordinated by level (i.e., network, cooperation, coordination, coalition, and collaboration). Cards must be coordinated by the level of community linkage that they define. For example, Blue = Network; Green =





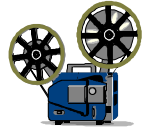
Cooperation; White = Coordination; Gold = Coalition; Red = Collaboration. Thus, the blue purpose card would describe the general purpose of a network. The blue structure card would describe the general structure of a network. Finally, the blue process card would describe the general process of a network.

### Card Sort Number Sheet

Newsprint for the facilitator to write on peoples ranking

Pen or pencil

Markers



### **Procedure:**

**Time to Complete: 20-40 minutes**

1. Three sets of five word cards are employed. The sets are categorized by the three function areas: purpose, structure, and process.
2. Hand out the first set (purpose) of cards. Explain to participants that each one of the five cards represents a specific purpose that may be the focus of the group. Explain to them that they are to rank order the cards in terms of their group's priority. That is, the card that they put at the top should contain the purpose which is the highest priority for their group. The second card to the top should be the card whose purpose is the second highest priority. They should sort all five cards by rank. (5 minutes)
3. Then they should paper clip the cards so they stay in their rank order and flip them over.
4. Hand out the second set (structure) of cards. Have participants do step two again. Only this time have them sort the structure cards. (5 Minutes)
5. Hand out the third set (process) of cards. Again, have participants complete step two using the process cards.
6. After they have sorted all the cards, hand out the Card Sort Number Sheet (see Handout) and have them fill them out. They need to assign numbers to the cards from highest to lowest. These numbers should be written on the Card Sort Number Sheet. Thus, the top card would get a 5, the second to the top would get a 4 and so on and so forth.



- 7. After the participants have filled in the numbers they will be able to see what level of community linkage they are at in terms of purpose, structure, and process. In addition participant will be able to see if their priorities for each function area match up.

Example:

For example, someone might have scored the purpose Gold card a 5 and the structure Gold card a 5 but scored the process Gold card a 3 and the process blue card a 5. This indicates that they are operating at Network level of the process function even though their purpose and structure is at then coalition level. Thus, the participant can identify what level they are operating each of the three function areas and whether that level is the same for each functional area. Differences in the level between function areas is an indication of some problem to be address. For example, the individual may want to examine his coalitions process function and identify strategies to move into operating on the coalition process level instead of the network process level.

<b>Card Sort Number Sheet:</b>								
<u>Purpose</u>			<u>Structure</u>			<u>Process</u>		
Blue card	_____		Blue card	_____		Blue card	_____	<u>5</u>
Green card	_____		Green card	_____		Green card	_____	
White card	_____		White card	_____		White card	_____	
Gold card	<u>5</u>		Gold card	<u>5</u>		Gold card	<u>3</u>	
Red card	_____		Red card	_____		Red card	_____	

Blue = Network; Green = Cooperation; White = Coordination; Gold = Coalition  
Red = Collaboration



<b>Card Sort Number Sheet</b>			
<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Structure</u>	<u>Process</u>	<u>Tally</u>
Blue card _____	Blue card _____	Blue card _____	_____
Green card _____	Green card _____	Green card _____	_____
White card _____	White card _____	White card _____	_____
Gold card _____	Gold card _____	Gold card _____	_____
Red card _____	Red card _____	Red card _____	_____
		=	45

Purpose \_\_\_\_\_  
 Highest Priority Card  
 #5 Write color

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Level of Linkage

Structure \_\_\_\_\_  
 Highest Priority Card  
 #5 Write color

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Level of Linkage

Process \_\_\_\_\_  
 Highest Priority Card  
 #5 Write color

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Level of Linkage

### Codes

Blue = Network Green = Cooperation White = Coordination  
 Gold = Coalition Red = Collaboration